

Site: M:26/16/3

The Johnson/Talley House

Built: 1916

11 Martin's Lane

Builder: S. Leonard Gray

Private

This 2-1/2 story frame American foursquare was constructed for black Washingtonians on land that had once been part of Samuel Martin's farm. It was built for Nora and Arthur Johnson, who lived in the house until 1965. The Johnsons verbally pledged to mortgage their home in 1936 on behalf of William Gibbs, principal of the Rockville Colored Elementary School, who challenged Montgomery County's salary differences between the races.

Survey No. <sup>M</sup> 26/16/3

Magi No. 1651455704

DOE yes ☒ noNR yes ☒ no

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic The Johnson/Talley House

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number 11 Martin's Lane not for publicationcity, town Rockville vicinity of congressional district 8state Maryland county Montgomery (RV Planning Area 4)

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Herman R. Talley

street &amp; number 11 Martin's Lane telephone no.: 424-7862

city, town Rockville state and zip code Maryland 20850

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Will Records liber VMB 199street & number Montgomery County Courthouse folio 58city, town Rockville state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission

te 1976 Park Historian's Office federal ☒ state ☒ county local

depository for survey records Needwood Mansion Needwood Road

city, town Derwood state Maryland

## 7. Description

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### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The subject house faces south on Martin's Lane, and is situated on a deep, narrow lot landscaped with trees, shrubs and perennials. A cement sidewalk steps up to the terraced front lawn. A frame garage, smoke house, and large garden are in the rear yard.

This 1916 frame, square, three-bay by three-bay, 2-1/2 story American Foursquare has a composition shingled pyramidal hipped roof extended forward to encompass the central front dormer roof. The original wood siding was covered with pebble dash ca. 1930. The house rests on rusticated concrete block molded on the property and has one interior brick chimney on the rear slope.

The three-bay south (front) facade has a central pyramidal hipped dormer with a narrow strip of three small single lights and siding on the sides. The second story windows are slightly shorter than those on the first story, but all are 2/2 unshuttered windows with plain surrounds. One window is in each of the three second-story bays and in the east two first-story bays. A one-light panel exterior door occupies the west bay. The full width front porch has a low-hipped composition shingle roof supported by four Doric columns resting on block piers infilled with lattice panel. A plain stick and rail balustrade connects the columns. Two cement steps flanked by wrought iron handrails access the porch.

The three-bay west facade has an irregular fenestration. There is one window in each of the two south bays, second story, and one window in the north bay, first story. A small square, one-light window is in the south bay.

The three-bay north (rear) facade has a window in the east and west second-story bay. The first story is occupied by an enclosed back porch with a small square one-light window in the west bay, a wood four-light exterior door in the center bay, and a pair of rectangular six-light windows in the east bay. A single six-light window is on the west facade of the porch.

The two-bay east facade has regular fenestration with a window in the north and south bays both stories. There is one rectangular cellar window in the foundation.

### Garage;

Behind the house, facing south, a two bay frame garage rests on a rusticated concrete block foundation, sheathed in German siding with a low-hipped roof. Two bays, each with two six-light garage doors, are on the south. A 6/1 window is on the north facade.

continued on attachment 7.1

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history

Specific dates 1916 Builder/Architect S. L. Gray

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### Significance

This house was constructed for black Washingtonians on land that had once been part of Samuel Martin's farm. The "American Foursquare" has only had two owners since its construction in 1916.

### History and Support

Samuel Martin, born a slave in the Nichols family, chose to remain near Rockville after his emancipation at the age of 29. When he died in 1873, he left considerable fortune and property, as well as the respect of those who knew him. He divided an 8-3/4 acre parcel just outside of Rockville into five equal parts, willing Lot No. 5 at the east end of his property to his daughter Miranda Watkins Martin. 1/

By the time of her death in 1902, Lot No. 5 was owned by Catherine M. W. Martin, who resided at 1713 R Street, N.W., in Washington. Her will empowered Frank Higgins, executor and local attorney, to sell Lot No. 5 and divide the proceeds between her two daughters. 2/

The following year, each daughter purchased half of the property. Evelyn Victoria Carter of Washington D.C. purchased the eastern half of Lot No. 5, 3 roods and 23 square perches of land, for \$200 from her mother's estate. 3/ Eight years later, after her death, Evelyn Carter's husband Thomas and their six children sold the property to Nora and Arthur Johnson, also of Washington. 4/

In May 1916, the Johnsons signed a contract with builder S.L.Gray of Alexandria to construct their house. Gray was related to a Martin's Lane family. The document agreed that Gray would build a "certain two story house 22 by 28 in accordance with plan of two story House in Alex. Co. Rowe Subdivision with an addition of 2 windows and flues 18 by 18'." The Johnsons would furnish all materials for the house and pay Gray \$1300. Gray built three other houses in the area at the same time, another in Haiti, one in Lincoln Park, and one in Rockville. 5/

continued on attachment 8.1

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Montgomery County Land, and Will Records. Interview with Herman Talley and documents in his possession.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 37,551 square feet

Quadrangle name

Quadrangle scale

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Part of Lot #5 of Samuel Martin's estate.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Eileen McGuckian	Judy Christensen, Arch. Description
organization	Peerless Rockville	date June 1986
street & number	P. O. Box 4262	telephone 762-0096
city or town	Rockville	state Maryland 20850

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

M:26/16/3

The Johnson/Talley House  
Attachment 8.1

The house was heated by wood stoves; front and rear porches kept it cool in summer. Decorative interior details included carved mantels, newel post, and bullseye molding. Outbuildings on the deep narrow lot were a smoke house and garage (both still standing), two chicken houses, and an outhouse. Though the Smokehouse has a fieldstone foundation, all of the other buildings have concrete block foundations molded in the back yard at the time of construction.

The Johnsons worked for a family named Kaufmann and lived in their house on West Melrose near Chevy Chase Circle. The Johnsons would come to Martin's Lane on their days off and as often as possible during the summer. They kept chickens and pigs, separating them from the large garden by fences.

The Johnson property was bordered on the east by Jim Veirs' large farm. Cattle grazed in the area where the post office is now located, and blackberries were plentiful.

In 1927 the Johnsons modernized their house. They installed a bath and central heating, removing the east chimney. At this time, or a few years afterward, they covered the original clapboard with pebbledash.

In 1936 William Gibbs, principal of the Rockville Colored Elementary School, sued the Montgomery County School Board because his salary was less than two-thirds of a white with comparable responsibilities and experience. Rockville's black community felt close to Mr. Gibbs, and several individuals made a verbal commitment to mortgage their homes if Mr. Gibbs found himself in financial difficulties resulting from the case. Six Rockville black homeowners, including the Johnsons and Alphonzo Lee, who lived farther west on Martin's Lane, made this offer to Thurgood Marshall, Mr. Gibbs' attorney. 6/ Mr. Gibbs did not lose his case, but his contract was not renewed and he moved to Philadelphia. Black teachers' salaries increased the following school year, until they eventually equalled those of whites.

Arthur Johnson died in 1944. In the 1950s Washington St. was rerouted, Hungerford Drive was built through the Veirs farm, and the old road to Frederick became Route 240. The cattle and blackberries were replaced by cars.

After Nora Johnson's death in November 1965, the property was devised to her brother's son, Herman Talley. As Mr. Talley lived out of the country, he rented it to his brother until his retirement in 1975.

Herman Talley has made some minor alterations to the house over the past ten years. He has retained one original carved mantel with mirrored overmantel, the newel post and bullseye moldings. The old smokehouse is now used as a tool shed.

continued on attachment 8.2

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Attachment 7.1

Smokehouse;

Now used as a tool shed, the smokehouse has vertical tongue and groove siding and is built on a fieldstone base. There is no fenestration.

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The Johnson/Talley House  
Attachment 8.2

Footnotes:

1. Judgment Records of Montgomery County, EBP14/120 (1873).
2. Montgomery County Will Records, HCA 4/85 (1902).
3. Montgomery County Land Records TD 27/196.
4. Land Records, 222/278 (1911).
5. Information from Herman Talley, interviewed July 1986, and from documents in his possession.
6. Information from William Gibbs in a conversation with Sharyn Duffin.

1982  
City of Rockville  
scale: 1"= 600'

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4

Talley House

11 Martin's Lane







**RICHARD H. ANDREWS**  
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